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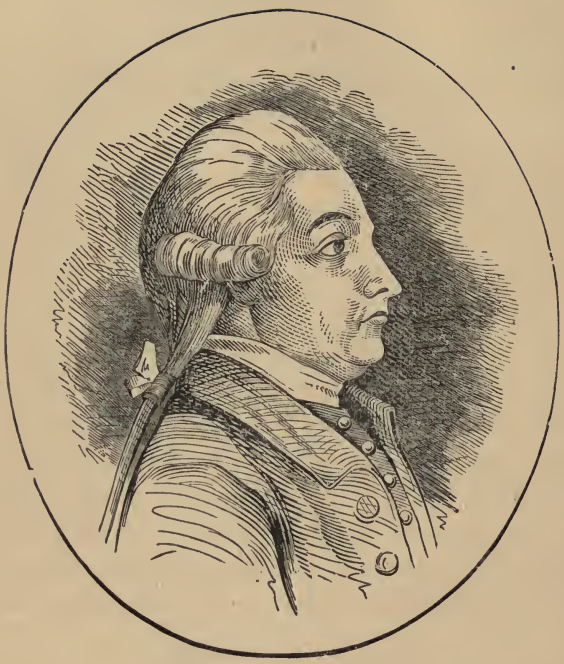

Capt. JONATHAN CARVER.

CAPT. JONATHAN CARVER, AND HIS EXPLORATIONS.

FROM THE "MATERIALS FOR MINNESOTA HISTORY"—1856.

Though the treaty of 1763, made at Versailles, between France and England, ceded all the Territory comprised within the limits of Wisconsin and Minnesota, to the latter power, the English did not for a long time obtain a foothold. The country West of Lake Michigan appears to have been trodden by but few British subjects, previous to him who forms the subject of the present article, and whose name has become somewhat famous in consequence of his heirs having laid claims to the site of St. Paul, and many miles adjacent.

JONATHAN CARVER was a native of Connecticut. It has been asserted, that he was a lineal descendent of JOHN CARVER, the first Governor of Plymouth Colony, * but the only definite information that the writer can obtain concerning

*[This statement is now known to be erroneous—since it is shown that Gov. CARVER had no son, and but a single daughter. In the proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, Oct 2d, 1871, it is stated that it was at Stillwater in New York where CARVER was born—and that there is no such place as Stillwater in Connecticut. Dr. L. C. DRAPER, of Madison Wis. the accurate and learned historical scholar, commenting on this statement in Vol. 6 of the Wis. Histor. Collect. says: "We infer that he was not a native of Stillwater, N. Y., from the fact stated in FRENCH's Historical and Statistical Gazetteer of New York, that Stillwater was not settled till about 1750, eighteen years after CARVER's birth; and the CARVER name does not appear among the first settlers of that town. Dr. PETERS states that CARVER was born in Canterbury, Conn. and HINMAN's Genealogy of the Puritans of Connecticut gives the names of several CARVERS among the early settlers there. BARBER, in his Historical Collections of Connecticut, states that it is believed that Captain CARVER was born in Canterbury. All things considered this inference seems the most probable." W.]

his ancestry, is that his grandfather, WM. CARVER, was a native of Wigan, Lancashire, England, and a captain in King WILLIAM'S army during the campaign in Ireland, and for meritorious services received an appointment as an officer of the Colony of Connecticut.

His father was a justice of the peace in the new world, and in 1732, at Stillwater, or Canterbury, Conn., the subject of this sketch was born. At the early age of fifteen he was called to mourn the death of his father. He then commenced the study of medicine, but his roving disposition could not bear the confines of a doctor's office, and feeling perhaps that his genius would be cramped by pestle and mortar, at the age of eighteen he purchased an ensign's commission in one of the regiments Connecticut raised during the French war. He was of medium stature, and of strong mind and quick perceptions.

In the year 1757, he was present at the massacre of Fort William Henry, and narrowly escaped with his life.

After the peace of 1763, between France and England was declared, CARVER conceived the project of exploring the North-west. Leaving Boston in the month of June, 1766, he arrived at Mackinac, then the most distant British post, in the month of August. Having obtained a credit on some French and English traders from Major RODGERS, the officer in command, he started with them Westward, on the third day of September. Pursuing the usual route to Green Bay, they arrived there on the eighteenth.

The French Fort at that time was standing, though much decayed. It was some years previous to his arrival, garrisoned for a short time by an officer and thirty English soldiers, but they having been captured by the Menominees, it was abandoned.

In company with the traders he left Green Bay on the twentieth, and ascending Fox River, arrived on the twenty-

fifth at an island at the East end of Lake Winnebago, containing about fifty acres.

Here he found a Winnebago village of fifty houses. He asserts that a woman was in authority. In the month of October, the party was at the portage of the Wisconsin, and descending that stream, they arrived on the ninth at a town of the Sauks. While here he visited some lead mines about fifteen miles distant. An abundance of lead was also seen in the village, that had been brought from the mines.

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN DESCRIBED.

On the 10th, they arrived at the first village of the Ottigaumies, (Foxes,) and about five miles before the Wisconsin joins the Mississippi, he perceived the remnants of another village, and learned that it had been deserted about thirty years before, and that the inhabitants soon after their removal built a town on the Mississippi, near the mouth of the Ouisconsin, at a place called by the French *La Prairie les Chiens*, which signified the "Dog Plains." It is a large town, and contains about three hundred families. The houses are all well built, after the Indian manner, and pleasantly situated on a dry rich soil.

"I saw here many horses of a good size and shape. This town is the great mart where all the adjacent tribes, and where those who inhabit the most remote branches of the Mississippi, annually assemble about the latter end of May, bringing with them their furs to dispose of to the traders. But it is not always that they conclude their sale here. This is determined by a general council of the chiefs, who consult whether it would be more conducive to their interest to sell their goods at this place, or carry them on to Louisiana or Michilimackinack."

At a small stream called Yellow River, opposite Prairie du Chien, the traders who had thus far accompanied CARVER took up their residence for the winter.

From this point he proceeded in a canoe, with a Canadian Voyageur, and a Mohawk Indian, as companions.

SUPPOSED ANCIENT FORTIFICATIONS.

Just before reaching Lake Pepin, while his attendants were one day preparing dinner, he walked out and was struck with the peculiar appearance of the surface of the country, and thought it was the site of some vast artificial earth-work.

It is a fact worthy of remembrance that he was the first to call the attention of the civilized world to the existence of ancient monuments in the Mississippi Valley. We give his own description:

"On the first of November, I reached Lake Pepin, a few miles below which I landed; and whilst the servants were preparing my dinner, I ascended the bank to view the country. I had not proceeded far, before I came to a fine, level, open plain, on which I perceived at a little distance, a partial elevation that had the appearance of entrenchments. On a nearer inspection, I had greater reason to suppose that it had really been intended for this many centuries ago. Notwithstanding it was now covered with grass, I could plainly see that it had once been a breast-work of about four feet in height, extending the best part of a mile, and sufficiently capacious to cover five thousand men. Its form was somewhat circular, and its flanks reached to the river.

"Though much defaced by time, every angle was distinguishable, and appeared as regular and fashioned with as much military skill as if planned by VAUBAN himself. The ditch was not visible; but I thought, on examining more curiously, that I could perceive there certainly had been one. From its situation, also, I am convinced that it must have been designed for that purpose. It fronted the country, and the rear was covered by the river, nor was there any rising ground for a considerable way that commanded it; a few straggling lakes were alone to be seen near it. In many places small tracks were worn across it by the feet of the elks or deer, and from the depth of the bed of earth by which it was covered, I was able to draw certain conclusions of its great antiquity. I examined all the angles and every part with great attention, and have often blamed myself for not encamping on the spot, and drawing an exact plan of it. To show that this description is not the offspring of a heated imagination, or the chimerical tale of a mistaken

traveler, I find, on enquiry, since my return, that Mons. ST. PIERRE and several travelers have, at different times, taken notice of similar appearances, upon which they have formed the same conjectures, but without examining them so minutely as I did. How a work of this kind could exist in a country that has hitherto (according to the generally received opinion) been the seat of war to untutored Indians alone, whose whole stock of military knowledge has only, till within two centuries, amounted to drawing the bow, and whose only breast-work, even at present, is the thicket, I know not. I have given as exact an account as possible of this singular appearance, and leave to future explorers of those distant regions, to discover whether it is a production of nature or art. Perhaps the hints I have here given, might lead to a more perfect investigation of it, and give us very different ideas of the ancient state of realms, that we at present believe to have been, from the earliest period, only the habitations of savages."

LAKE PEPIN AND ITS EARLY FORTS.

Lake Pepin excited his admiration, as it has that of every traveler since his day, and here he remarks: "I observed the ruins of a French Factory, where it is said Captain ST. PIERRE resided, and carried on a very great trade with the Naudawessies, before the reduction of Canada."

The first trading houses north of the Illinois River were erected in the vicinity of Lake Pepin. As early as 1687, NICHOLAS PERROT was trading in the neighborhood of the Sioux, and CHARLEVOIX, in his History of New France, says that he built a fort near the mouth of the Lake. Upon the map of NICOLLET on the east side of the lake, near Porcupine-Quill Creek, the ruins of a French fort are marked. PIKE, in his Journal of 1805, remarks: "Just below the *Point Le Sable*, the French, under FRONTENAC, who had driven the Renards from the Wisconsin, and chased them up the Mississippi, built a stockade on this lake, as a barrier against the savages. It became a noted factory for the Sioux."

In a map published in Europe as early as 1720, there is a fort marked on the lake. These facts are confirmed by the

Dakota tradition, which asserts that the first trading post was located at the foot of the lake.

DAKOTAS AT THE ST. CROIX.

CARVER'S first acquaintance with the Dakotas commenced near the river St. Croix. It would seem that the erection of trading posts on Lake Pepin had enticed the Sioux from their old residence on Rum River and Mille Lac.

He says: "Near the river St. Croix, reside bands of the Naudowessie Indians, called the River Bands. This nation is composed at present of eleven bands. They were originnally twelve, but the Assinipoils, some years ago, revolting and separating themselves from the others, there remain only at this time eleven. Those I met here are termed the River Bands, because they chiefly dwell near the banks of this river; the other eight are generally distinguished by the title of Naudowessies of the Plains, and inhabit a country more to the westward. The name of the former are Nehogatawonahs, the Mawtawbauntowahs, and Shashweentowahs."

On the OTIS farm, above Marine Mills, in the valley of the St. Croix, there are numerous mounds, and every appearance of an Indian settlement. Dakota tradition alleges that there was once a small and powerful band that lived above Lake St. Croix. The Mantanton Dakotas, which are spoken of by LE SUEUR and CARVER, may refer to these under the designation of Mawtawbauntowahs.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CAVE AT ST. PAUL.

"About thirteen miles below the Falls of St. Anthony, at which I arrived the tenth day after I left Lake Pepin, is a remarkable cave of an amazing depth. The Indians term it *Wakon-teebe*. The entrance into it is about ten feet wide, the height of it five feet. The arch within is near fifteen feet high, and about thirty feet broad; the bottom consists of fine clear sand. About thirty feet from the entrance, begins a lake, the water of which is transparent, and extends to an unsearchable distance,

for the darkness of the cave prevents all attempts to acquire a knowledge of it. I threw a small pebble towards the interior part of it with my utmost strength; I could hear that it fell into the water, and notwithstanding it was of a small size, it caused an astonishing and terrible noise, that reverberated through all those gloomy regions. I found in this cave many Indian hieroglyphics, which appeared very ancient, for time had nearly covered them with moss, so that it was with difficulty I could trace them. They were cut in a rude manner upon the inside of the wall, which was composed of a stone so extremely soft that it might be easily penetrated with a knife; a stone everywhere to be found near the Mississippi."*

"At a little distance from this dreary cavern, is the burying place of several bands of the Naudowessie Indians. Though these people have no fixed residence, living in tents, and seldom but a few months in one spot, yet they always bring the bones of the dead to this place."

HIS JOURNEY TO, AND IMPRESSIONS OF THE FALLS OF ST. ANTHONY.

"Ten miles below the Falls of St. Anthony, the River St. Pierre, called by the natives *Wudapaw Menesotor*, fall into the Mississippi from the west. It is not mentioned by Father HENNEPIN, though a large, fair river. This omission, I consider, must have proceeded from a small island, that is situated exactly in its entrance."

When he reached the Minnesota River, the ice became so troublesome that he left his canoe in the neighborhood of what is now FINDLAY'S Ferry, and walked to St. Anthony, in company with a young Winnebago chief, who had never seen the curling waters. The chief, on reaching the eminence some distance below CHEEVER'S, began to invoke his gods, and offer oblations to the spirit in the waters.

*[The cave remained unchanged in appearance for over a century. On May 1, 1867, the one hundreth anniversary of CARVER'S purported treaty with the Naudowessies, the Minnesota Historical Society held a centennial celebration of that event. The pamphlet account of the same states that CARVER'S description of it, 100 years ago, above quoted, would have faithfully described it at the time of the centenary. Within the past two years, however, sad changes have taken place. The St. Paul & Chicago Railroad, having condemned for their use the strip of land along the river bank, including the "bluff," or cliff in which is the cave, have dug it down and nearly destroyed it. But a shallow cavity now remains to mark its site. The pool or lake is gone, and the limpid stream that flows through it now *supplies a railroad tank*. Its poetry and romance are destroyed by the necessities of our modern trade and material growth. W.]

"In the middle of the Falls stands a small island, about *forty feet* broad and somewhat longer, on which grow a few cragged hemlock and spruce trees, and about half way between this island and the eastern shore, is a rock, lying at the very edge of the Falls, in an oblique position, that appeared to be about five or six feet broad, and thirty or forty long. At a little distance below the Falls, stands a small island of about an acre and half, on which grow a great number of oak trees."

From this description, it would appear that the little island, now some distance in front of the Falls, was once in the very midst, and shows that a constant recession has been going on, and that in ages long past, they were not far from the Minnesota River. A century hence, if the wearing of the last five years is any criterion, the Falls will be above the town of St. Anthony.

No description is more glowing than CARVER'S, of the country adjacent.

"The country around them is extremely beautiful. It is not an uninterrupted plain, where the eye finds no relief, but composed of many gentle ascents, which in the summer are covered with the finest verdure, and interspersed with little groves that give a pleasing variety to the prospect. On the whole, when the Falls are included, which may be seen at the distance of four miles, a more pleasing and picturesque view I believe cannot be found throughout the universe."

He arrived at the falls on the 17th of November, 1766, and appears to have visited Elk River.

CARVER'S VOYAGE UP THE MINNESOTA.

On the twenty-fifth of November, he had returned to the place opposite the Minnesota, where he had left his canoe, and this stream as yet not being obstructed with ice, he commenced its ascent, with the colors of Great Britain flying at the stern of his canoe. There is no doubt that he entered this river, but how far he explored it cannot be ascertained. He speaks of the Rapids near Shakopee, and asserts that he went as far as two hundred miles beyond Mendota. He remarks:

"On the 7th of December, I arrived at the utmost extent of my travels

towards the West, where I met a large party of the Naudowessie Indians, among whom I resided some months."

After speaking of the upper bands of the Dakotas, and their allies, he adds that he "left the habitations of the hospitable Indians the latter end of April, 1767, but did not part from them for several days, as I was accompanied on my journey by near three hundred of them, to the mouth of the river St. Pierre. At this season, these bands annually go to the great cave before mentioned."

SPEECH MADE AT THE CAVE.

"When we arrived at the great cave, and the Indians had deposited the remains of their deceased friends in the burial place that stands adjacent to it, they held their great council, into which I was admitted. On this occasion I made the following speech, which I insert to give my readers a specimen of the language and manner in which it is necessary to address the Indians, so as to engage their attention. It was delivered on the first day of May, 1767:

"My brothers!—Chiefs of the numerous and powerful Naudowessies!—I rejoice that through my long abode with you I can now speak to you, though after an imperfect manner, in your own tongue, like one of your own children. I rejoice also, that I have had an opportunity so frequently to inform you of the glory and power of the great king that reigns over the English and other nations; who is descended from a very ancient race of sovereigns, as old as the earth and water; whose feet stands on two great islands, longer than any of you have ever seen; whose head reaches to the sun, and whose arms encircle the whole earth; the number of whose warriors are equal to the trees in the valleys, the stalks of rice in yonder marshes, or the blades of grass in your great plains; who has hundreds of canoes of his own, of such amazing bigness, that all the waters in your country would not suffice for one of them to swim in; each of which have guns, not small, like mine, which you see before you, but of such magnitude that an hundred of your stoutest young men would with difficulty be able to carry one.

"You may remember the other day, when we were encamping at Wadapaw Menesotor, the black clouds, the winds, the fire, the stupendous noise, and terrible cracks, and the trembling of the earth which then alarmed you, and gave you reason to think that your gods were angry with you; not unlike these are the warlike implements of the English, when they are fighting the battles of their great king.

Several of the chiefs of your bands have told me in times past, when I dwelt with you in your tents, that they much wished to be counted among the children and allies of the great king, my master. * * * *

Being now about to take my leave of you, and to return to my own country, a long way toward the rising sun, I again ask you to tell me whether you continue of the same mind as when I spoke to you in council last winter and as there are now several of your chiefs here who came from the great plains toward the setting of the sun, whom I have never spoken with in council before, I ask you to let me know if you are willing to acknowledge yourselves the children of my great master, the king of the English.

I charge you not to give heed to bad reports, for there are wicked birds flying about among the neighboring nations, who may whisper evil things in your ears against the English, contrary to what I have told you ; you must not believe them, for I have told you the truth.

As for the chiefs that are about to go to Michilimackinac, I shall take care to make for them and their suit a straight road, smooth waters, and a clear sky, that they may go there and smoke the pipe of peace, and res secure on a beaver blanket under the shade of the great tree of peace. Farewell !"

Though the reader will doubt if such a speech was ever made by JONATHAN, in the Dakota tongue, he will readily admit its grandiloquence.

BURIAL CEREMONIES OF THE DAKOTAS.

"When the Naudowessies brought their dead for interment to the great cave, I attempted to get an insight into the remaining burial rites, but whether it was on account of the stench which arose from so many bodies, or whether they chose to keep this part of their custom secret from me, I could not discover. I found, however, that they considered my curiosity as ill-timed, and therefore I withdrew. * * * * * *

One formality among the Naudowessies in mourning for the dead, is very different from any mode I observed in the other nations through which I passed. The men, to show how great their sorrow is, pierce the flesh of their arms above the elbows with arrows, and the women cut and gash their legs with sharp broken flints, till the blood flows very plentifully. * * * * * * * *

After the breath is departed, the body is dressed in the same attire it usually wore, his face is painted, and he is seated in an erect posture on a mat or skin, placed in the middle of the hut, with his weapons by his side. His relatives seated around, each harangues in turn the deceased, and if he has been a great warrior recounts his heroic actions nearly to

the following purport, which in the Indian language is extremely poetical and pleasing:

'You still sit among us, Brother, your person retains its usual resemblance, and continues similar to ours, without any visible deficiency, except it has lost the power of action! But whither is that breath flown, which a few hours ago sent up smoke to the Great Spirit? Why are those lips silent, that lately delivered to us expressions and pleasing language? Why are those feet motionless that a short time ago were fleeter than the deer on yonder mountains? Why useless hang those arms that could climb the tallest tree, or draw the toughest bow? Alas, every part of that frame which we lately beheld with admiration and wonder, is now become as inanimate as it was three hundred years ago! We will not however bemoan thee as if thou wast forever lost to us, or that thy name would be buried in oblivion; thy soul yet lives in the great country of Spirits with those of thy nation that have gone before thee, and though we are left behind to perpetuate thy fame, we shall one day join thee.

"Actuated by the respect we bore thee whilst living, we now come to tender thee the last act of kindness in our power; that thy body might not lie neglected on the plain and become a prey to the beasts of the field or fowls of the air, we will take care to lay it with those of thy predecessors who have gone before thee; hoping at the same time that thy spirit will feed with their spirits, and be ready to receive ours when we shall also arrive at the great country of Souls."

For this speech CARVER is principally indebted to his imagination, but it is well conceived, and suggested in one of Schiller's poems, called the "Death Song of a Nadowessie Chief," which GOETHE considered one of his finest productions, and which has received two translations into English, one by Sir JOHN HERSCHELL, and the other by Sir E. L. BULWER.

It appears from other sources that CARVER'S visit to the Dakotas was of some effect in bringing about friendly intercourse between them and the commander of the English force at Mackinac.*

* The earliest mention of the Sioux, in any public British documents that we know of, is in the correspondence between Sir WM. JOHNSON, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Colony of New York, and General GAGE, in command of the forces:

CARVER'S FORESIGHT.

Though a wilderness of over one thousand miles intervened between the Falls of St. Anthony and the white settlements of the English, he was fully impressed with the idea that the territory now organized under the name of Minnesota, on account of its beauty and fertility, would attract settlers.

Speaking of the advantages of the country, he says that the future population will be "able to convey their produce to the seaports with great facility, the current of the river from its source to its entrance into the Gulf of Mexico, being extremely favorable for doing this in small craft. This might also in time be facilitated by canals or shorter cuts, and a communication opened by water with New York, by way of the Lakes."

He was also confident that a route could be discovered by way of the Minnesota River, which "would open a passage for conveying intelligence to China, and the English settlements in the East Indies."*

On the eleventh of September, less than six months after CARVER'S speech at Dayton's Bluff, and the departure of a number of Chiefs to the English Fort at Mackinac, JOHNSON writes to General GAGE :—"Though I wrote you some days ago, yet I would not mind saying something again on the score of the vast expenses incurred, and, as I understand, still incurring at Michilimackinac, chiefly on pretense of making a peace between the Sioux and Chippeweighs, with which I think we have very little to do, in good policy or otherwise."

Sir WILLIAM JOHNSON, in a letter to Lord HILLSBOROUGH, one of his Majesty's Ministers dated August 17th, 1768, again refers to the subject :

"Much greater part of those who go a trading are men of such circumstances and disposition as to venture their persons everywhere for extravagant gains, yet the consequences to the public are not to be slighted, as we may be led into a general quarrel through their means. The Indians in the part adjacent to Michilimackinac have been treated with at a very great expense for some time previous. "Major RODGERS brings a considerable charge against the former for meditating a peace between some tribes of the Sioux and some of the Chippeweighs, which, had it been attended with success, would only have been interesting to a very few French, and others, that had goods in that part of the Indian country, but the contrary has happened, and they are now more violent, and war against one another."

* CARVER, in common with other travelers, had his theory on the origin of the Dakotas. He supposed that they came from Asia. He remarks, "But this might have

HIS RETURN TO ENGLAND, AND DEATH.

CARVER having returned to England, interested WHITWORTH, a member of Parliament, in the northern route. Had not the American Revolution commenced, they proposed to have built a fort at Lake Pepin, to have proceeded up the Minnesota, until they found, as they supposed they could, a branch of the Missouri, and from thence journeying over the summit of lands, until they came to a river which they called Oregon, which they would descend to the Pacific.

In England, CARVER appears to have had difficulty, and soon became quite reduced, and in 1779 he became a clerk in a lottery office, and married, while his first wife was living in America. After his death, the children of each wife kept up a correspondence.

He was a ready writer, and prepared, besides his travels, a Gazetteer, and a Treatise on the Tobacco Plant, and seems to have met with some attention from the literary circles.

He died in great want, at the age of forty-eight, in 1780. In 1817, some of his heirs visited this country with the following:

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been at different times and from various parts; from Tartary, China, Japan, the inhabitants of these places resemble each other. * * * * *

"It is very evident that some of the names and customs of the American Indians resemble those of the Tartars, and I make no doubt but that in some future era, and this not very distant, it will be reduced to certainty that during some of the wars between the Tartars and the Chinese, a part of the inhabitants of the northern provinces were driven from their native country, and took refuge in some of the isles before mentioned, and from thence found their way into America. * * * * *

"Many words are used both by the Chinese and Indians which have a resemblance to each other, not only in their sound but in their signification. The Chinese call a slave *Shungo;* and the Naudowessie Indians, whose language, from their little intercourse with the Europeans, is least corrupted, term a dog *Shungush* (Shoankah.) The former denominate our species of their tea Shoushong; the latter call their tobacco *Shons-as-sau* (Chanshasha.) Many other of the words used by the Indians contain the syllables *che*, *chaw*, and *chu*, after the dialect of the Chinese." The comparison of languages have become a rich source of historical knowledge, yet very many of the analogies traced are fanciful.

DEED PURPORTING TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN AT THE CAVE IN THE BLUFF BELOW ST. PAUL.

"To JONATHAN CARVER, a chief under the most mighty and potent GEORGE the Third, King of the English, and other nations, the fame of whose warriors has reached our ears, and has been now fully told us by our *good brother* JONATHAN, aforesaid, whom we rejoice to have come among us, and bring us good news from his country.

We, chiefs of the Naudowessies, who have hereunto set our seals, do by these presents, for ourselves and heirs forever, in return for the aid and other good services done by the said JONATHAN to ourselves and allies, give, grant and convey to him, the said JONATHAN, and to his heirs and assigns forever, the whole of a certain tract or territory of land, bounded as follows, viz. : from the Falls of St. Anthony, running on the east bank of the Mississippi, nearly southeast, as far as Lake Pepin, where the Chippewa joins the Mississippi, and from thence eastward, five days travel, accounting twenty English miles per day, and from thence again to the Falls of St. Anthony, on a direct straight line. We do, for ourselves, heirs, and assigns, forever give unto the said JONATHAN, his heirs and assigns, with all the trees, rocks, and rivers therein, reserving the sole liberty of hunting and fishing on land not planted or improved by the said JONATHAN, his heirs and assigns, to which we have affixed our respective seals.

HAW-NO-PAW-JA-TEN, his ⋈ mark,
(with his totem, or seal, of a turtle.)
O-TAH-TON-GOOM-LISH-EAW, his ⋈ mark,
(with his totem, or seal, of a snake.)

At the Great Cave, May 1st, 1767."

HISTORY OF THE CARVER LAND GRANT.

The following documents were called forth by the heirs of CARVER, petitioning the United States to give them a title to the land upon which St. Paul stands, and many miles more, because of the alleged grant of land,* made by the

* [If Capt. CARVER really obtained his grant on this occasion, why, it may be asked, did he maintain so complete a silence in his work on the subject—a silence that has given rise to a suspicion that the grant was merely an after thought on CARVER's part, or a forgery on the part of some one after his death? The most natural explanation we can offer is this:

That CARVER knew full well that by the King's proclamation of Oct. 7, 1763, indi-

Dakotas, to Captain JONATHAN CARVER, of the British army:

WASHINGTON, July 28, 1821.

SIR:—Agreeably to your request, I have the honor to inform you what I have understood from the Indians of the Sioux nation, as well as some facts within my own knowledge, as to what is commonly termed CARVER'S Grant. The grant purports to be made by the chiefs of the Sioux of the Plains, and one of the chiefs uses the sign of a serpent, and the other a turtle, purporting that their names are derived from those animals.

The land lies on the east side of the Mississippi. The Indians do not recognize or acknowledge the grant to be valid, and they (among others) assign the following reasons:

(1.) The Sioux of the Plains never owned a foot of land on the east side of the Mississippi. The Sioux nation is divided into two grand divisions, viz.: The Sioux of the Lake, or perhaps more literally the Sioux of the River, and the Sioux of the Plain. The former subsists by hunting and fishing, and usually move from place to place by water, in

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viduals were strictly inhibited from acquiring land grants from the Indians, whether singly or collectively; yet he nevertheless had so far won upon the friendship and gratitude of the Sioux chiefs, that a large land grant was easily obtained, and very tempting; and that he concluded to secure it, and trust to time and the merit of his discoveries and sacrifices, eventually to secure a confirmation of the grant. That he deemed it the better policy to omit all reference to the deed in his Volume of Travels, lest it should be thought that the work was gotten up for the special design of attracting attention to his grant, and aiding to secure its confirmation—that this very boldness, if practiced, might defeat the object in view. Hence he probably thought that by omitting all allusions to the grant, the work might, and probably would, be favorably received by the scientific and learned men of Great Britain and the Colonies, and would thus aid in building up a reputation in his behalf that would materially serve to strengthen his petition and appeal to the Government for the ultimate confirmation of the grant. We are strongly inclined to believe that such were the views that influenced Capt. CARVER in preserving entire silence in his work with reference to his grant, and that the result of the course he had adopted was very much as he had contemplated. * * * * * * * * * *

That the most of the Sioux, fifty years after the grant was given to CARVER, should plead ignorance of the transaction, is very natural—one positive evidence, from a reliable witness, would be worth more than a whole regiment of negative, or don't-know testimony. It is a well-known fact in Indian policy that the red men find it very convenient, after having sold lands and enjoyed the proceeds, to deny all knowledge of such sale, hoping to renew the bargain and get paid again; and thus keep up the process as long as they can make it work to their comfort and advantage. As early as 1742, COLDEN informs us, that the great Iroquois chief and orator, CA-NA-SA-TEE-GO, thus sharply rebuked some of his people, who had been playing this game: "This land you claim has gone through your guts; you have been furnished with clothes, meat, and drink, by the goods paid you for it, and now you want it again, children as you are."—Dr. LYMAN C. DRAPER, in the Wis. Historical Collections, Vol. 6.]

canoes, during the summer season, and travel on the ice in the winter, when not on their hunting excursions. The latter subsist entirely by hunting, and have no canoes, nor do they know but little about the use of them. They reside in the large prairies west of the Mississippi, and follow the buffalo, upon which they entirely subsist; these are called Sioux of the Plain, and never owned land east of the Mississippi.

(2.) The Indians say they have no knowledge of any such chiefs, as those who have signed the grant to CARVER, either amongst the Sioux of the River, or Sioux of the Plain. They say that if Captain CARVER did ever obtain a deed or grant, it was signed by some foolish young men who were not chiefs, and who were not authorized to make a grant. Among the Sioux of the River there are no such names.*

(3.) They say that the Indians never received any thing for their land, and they have no intention to part with it, without a consideration. From my knowledge of the Indians, I am induced to think they would not make so considerable a grant, and have it go into full effect, without receiving a substantial consideration.

(4.) They have, and ever have had the possession of the land, and intend to keep it. I know that they are very particular in making every person who wishes to cut timber on that tract, obtain their permission to do so, and obtain payment for it. In the month of May last, some Frenchmen brought a large raft of red cedar timber out of the Chippewa River, which timber was cut on the tract before mentioned. The Indians at one of the villages on the Mississippi, where the principal chief resided, compelled the Frenchmen to land the raft, and would not permit them to pass until they had received pay for the timber; and the Frenchmen were compelled to leave their raft with the Indians until they went to Prairie du Chien, and obtained the necessary articles and made the payment required.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

H. LEAVENWORTH.

To JOSIAH MEIGS, Esq., Com. General Land Office.

[*Communicated to the Senate, January* 23, 1823.]

Mr. VAN DYKE, from the committee on public lands, to whom was referred the petition of SAMUEL HARRISON, agent for the heirs of Cap-

* [CARVER only once in the body of his work mentions the chiefs whose signatures or "family coat of arms," are appended to the deed. On page 380, 3d London edition, he says: "The great warrior of the Naudowessies was named OTTAHTONGOOMLISHEAW, that is, Great Father of Snakes; *ottah* being in English, father, *tongoom*, great, and *lisheah*, a snake. Another chief was called HANAH-PAWJATIN, which means, a swift runner over the mountains.—CARVER Centenary Pamphlet.]

tain JONATHAN CARVER, praying for the recognition and confirmation of an Indian deed, for a large tract of land near St. Anthony Falls, on the Mississippi; and also the petition of the Rev. SAMUEL PETERS, L. L. D., who claims said tract of land as assignee of the heirs of said Captain CARVER, and prays that he may be permitted to take possession of the same, reported:

The petitioners state, that Captain JONATHAN CARVER, in the year 1766, took a long tour among the Indian tribes, two hundred miles west of the Falls of Saint Anthony, in the Mississippi, and made important discoveries during his travel and residence of two years and five months, with various Indian tribes, which he caused to be printed and published in London, in 1773. That by his conciliatory measures, he gained the good will of the Indian tribes, and became the peacemaker between the two large nations who were at war; and to reward him for his wisdom and friendly interposition, the sachems of the Naudowessies, were pleased to grant, and accordingly gave to him and his heirs, a deed for a tract of land therein specially described, dated at the Great Cave, May the 1st, 1767; that the chiefs of said tribe, made him a chief of their tribe on the same day, and he then engaged to return and settle in said territory with his family and connections.

That Captain JONATHAN CARVER afterwards returned to Boston and sailed for London, where he arrived in the year 1769, and soon after laid his deed before the British government, praying for a confirmation of it, and received for an answer that it should be confirmed as soon as the history of his travels was printed and published. But in consequence of the misunderstanding which existed between Great Britain and America, the ratification of the deed was suspended. That Captain JONATHAN CARVER died in London, January 31st, 1780, leaving a numerous progeny; and by the establishment of the Independence of America, the right to ratify Indian grants devolved upon the government of the United States.

The Rev. SAMUEL PETERS, in his petition, further states, that LEFEI, the present emperor of the Sioux and Naudowessies, and RED WING, a sachem, the heirs and successors of the two grand chiefs who signed the said deed to Captain CARVER, have given satisfactory and positive proof, that they allowed their ancestors' deed to be genuine, good and valid, and that Captain CARVER'S heirs and assigns, are the owners of said territory, and may occupy it free of all molestation.

The committee have examined and considered the claims thus exhibited by the petitioners, and remark that the original deed is not produced, nor any competent legal evidence offered, of its execution; nor is there any proof that the persons, who it is alleged made the deed, were the

chiefs of said tribe, nor that (if chiefs) they had authority to grant and give away the land belonging to their tribe. The paper annexed to the petition, as a copy of said deed, has no subscribing witnesses; and it would seem impossible, at this remote period, to ascertain the important fact, that the persons who signed the deed comprehended and understood the meaning and effect of their act.

The want of proof as to these facts, would interpose in the way of the claimants insuperable difficulties. But, in the opinion of the committee, the claim is not such as the United States are under any obligation to allow, even if the deed were proved in legal form.

The British government, before the time when the alleged deed bears date, had deemed it prudent and necessary, for the preservation of peace with the Indian tribes under their sovereignty, protection and dominion, to prevent British subjects from purchasing lands from the Indians; and this rule of policy was made known and enforced by the proclamation of the king of Great Britain, of 7th October, 1763, which contains an express prohibition.

Captain CARVER, aware of the law, and knowing that such a contract could not vest the legal title in him, applied to the British government to ratify and confirm the Indian grant, and though it was competent for that government then to confirm the grant, and vest the title of said land in him, yet, from some cause, that government did not think proper to do it.

The territory has since become the property of the United States, and an Indian grant, not good against the British government, would appear to be not binding upon the United States government.

What benefit the British government derived from the services of Captain CARVER, by his travels and residence among the Indians, that government alone could determine, and alone could judge what remuneration those services deserved.

One fact appears from the declaration of Mr. PETERS, in his statement in writing, among the papers exhibited; namely, that the British government did give Captain CARVER the sum of one thousand, three hundred and seventy-five pounds, six shillings and eight pence sterling. To the United States, however, Captain CARVER rendered no services which could be assumed as any equitable ground for the support of the petitioner's claim.

The committee being of opinion that the United States are not bound, in law or equity, to confirm the said alleged Indian grant, recommended the adoption of the following resolution:—

"*Resolved*, That the prayer of the petitioners ought not to be granted."

The Rev. SAMUEL PETERS, here spoken of, was formerly an Episcopal minister in Connecticut. Being a tory, he went back to England after the Declaration of Independence. After many years he returned to this country, and died, at an advanced age, in New York city.

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